

# Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pennsylvania

## Where Mommy or Daddy Works

By: Sherre Mitten-Bell, DDSP Public Affairs

Employees at Defense Distribution Depot Suquehanna, Pennsylvania (DDSP) were invited to bring their children, or grandchildren, to the installation on July 24, 2001 for a VIP Kids Program. With fun and safety in mind, the program was designed to inform the children about DDSP's mission operation and installation support.

These VIP Kids learned about more than just what their own parent's do at work. They learned how every employee works together to support DDSP customers, the warfighters in the field. They learned how DDSP fits into the organizational structure of the Department of Defense (DoD) and that DDSP is the largest DoD wholesale distribution depot in the United States. They learned how DDSP operates two large facilities that are 11 miles apart, and that the New Cumberland facility is located at the Defense Distribution Center on 850 acres just outside the community of New Cumberland. And, they learned how DDSP maintains a military installation that is much like a small town.

Just before 10:00 a.m., employees and their sons, daughters, and grandchildren started to gather in the lobby of Building 2001. Special, colorful identification badges were prepared in advance for them to wear. "Now I can show my badge to the guard, just like you," said one little girl to her mother.

Morning snacks were offered to the participants before they were greeted by Captain Chris McKelvey, SC, USN, the DDSP Commander, and invited into the briefing room prepared to accommodate the group of approximately fifty participants. The children, and an occasional parent, interacted with the commander, as he presented an animated Command Overview

and Safety Brief specially prepared by the DDSP Public Affairs Officer, Ms Sherre Mitten-Bell.

With ages ranging from four to fourteen, the commander kept their attention by asking them questions throughout the session. Small arms and hands waved in the air at each opportunity to answer questions such as "Where is Yokosuka (DDYJ) located?" or "What is the advantage of being located near the highways?" Everyone agreed highways make it easier to get to work, and faster to getting out. The older children soon realized highways are advantageous for a trucking operation.

The group then toured the Eastern Distribution Center (EDC) carefully guided by Warehouse Management Specialist Mr. Terry Shickley. The tour was scheduled so that the automated towline carts were shut down for most of the time in order to keep noise at a minimum and safety at a maximum. A group of boys about nine years of age, eagerly maintained a straight front line, just barely behind the guide, as they marched through the EDC's 1.7 million square foot of floor space. The high-rise storage area held interest especially when an employee riding a Raymond Hybrid Crane lowered in front of them from over 65 feet above the ground.

Before leaving, most of the children ate lunch with their parents in the cafeteria where cartoons played and a Kids Menu was available. Asking the children what they liked most about the program resulted in a wide range of answers. For some, it was learning new things during the brief, for others, it was the size of the EDC, or it was the simple experience of eating at the cafeteria and laughing at Rocky and Bullwinkle. For all of them, it was seeing where Mommy or Daddy works, and being together, that made it a special day.

*DDSP kids day group shot—DDSP VIP Kids Program participants and tour guides.*



*DDSP kids day ALOC—A group of employees and their children tour the ALOC area of the EDC.*

